

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 16-20 and 30-41 will be pending. Rejected claims 1-15, 21-29, and 42-49 are canceled by this response, leaving only allowed claims 16-20 and 30-41 pending. Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Amendment is Proper for Entry

The instant amendment is proper for entry because it places the application in condition for allowance without raising new issues that would require further consideration or search. In particular, Applicants have canceled all rejected claims, leaving only the allowed claims pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 16-20 and 30-41 are allowed. In response to the Statement of Reasons for Allowance set forth in the pending Office Action, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for the patentability of claims in the present application. In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indication of allowability, Applicants submit that each of the claims in the present application recite a combination of features, and that the basis for patentability of each of these claims is based on the combination of features recited therein.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection

Claim 49 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants do not agree that claim 49 is indefinite. Nevertheless, claim 49 is canceled by this amendment in order to advance prosecution. Applicants expressly reserve the right to re-file the subject matter of claim 49 in a continuing application. The rejection of claim 49 is moot since claim 49 is now canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §112, 2nd Paragraph, rejection of claim 49 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 1 – 6, 9 – 13, 15, 21 – 26 and 46 – 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) for being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,653,032 issued to Miwa et al. (“Miwa”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants do not agree that the applied prior art anticipates claims 1 – 6, 9 – 13, 15, 21 – 26 and 46 – 48. Nevertheless, in order to advance prosecution, claims 1 – 6, 9 – 13, 15, 21 – 26 and 46 – 48 are canceled by this amendment. Applicants expressly reserve the right to re-file the subject matter of claims 1 – 6, 9 – 13, 15, 21 – 26 and 46 – 48 in one or more continuing applications. The rejection of claims 1 – 6, 9 – 13, 15, 21 – 26 and 46 – 48 is moot since these claims are now canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §102 rejection of claims 1 – 6, 9 – 13, 15, 21 – 26 and 46 – 48 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 7, 8, 14, and 27-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of US Patent No. 6,493,063 issued to Seltmann et al. (“Seltmann”). Claims 42 – 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miwa in view of US Patent No. 5,528,118 issued to Lee et al. (“Lee”). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants do not agree that the applied prior art renders claims 7, 8, 14, 27-29, and 42-45 unpatentable. However, in order to expedite allowance, claims 7, 8, 14, 27-29, and 42-45 are canceled by this amendment. Applicants expressly reserve the right to re-file the subject matter of claims 7, 8, 14, 27-29, and 42-45 in one or more continuing applications. The rejection of claims 7, 8, 14, 27-29, and 42-45 is moot since these claims are now canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §103 rejections of claims 7, 8, 14, 27-29, and 42-45 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-2478.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven D. SLONAKER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Calderon', written over a horizontal line.

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